



House Committee on Health Policy, 2016
Joanne Sheldon, MHSA, Chief Operating Officer, MPCA
Testimony Supporting HB 5400 – Advanced Practice Registered
Nurse (APRN) Licensure

Good morning, Chairman Callton and members of the committee. My name is Joanne Sheldon, and I write you today as Chief Operating Officer of Michigan Primary Care Association to express support of House Bill 5400. The Michigan Primary Care Association (MPCA) is a non-profit membership association of 41 community-based, comprehensive Health Center organizations throughout Michigan. For the past 36 years, we have been a consistent voice advocating on behalf of underserved individuals for breaking down barriers in access to health care services, whether they are physical, behavioral, or oral health related. With all the coordinated services provided by Michigan Health Centers, our member organizations are the pioneers of the patient-centered medical home model and, in many communities, the only chance for many vulnerable Michiganders to have a true dental, medical, and behavioral health home.

We bring a somewhat different perspective to the debate as we represent neither doctors nor nurses. Instead we represent the underserved individuals and communities in our state that are further threatened by current and future provider shortages as well as the organizations that exist specifically to provide for their health care needs. Our members provide medical, dental, mental health, substance use, pharmacy, and other enabling services to over 650,000 Michigan residents in more than 260 medically underserved communities. Health Centers provide care to people with or without insurance and must be located in and serve residents of federally-designated Medically-Underserved Areas and Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

Eighty-one of the eighty-three counties in Michigan have some form of a primary care HPSAs. Based on current and projected health professions shortages, we must act now to improve the availability of primary health care services to the residents of Michigan, and we believe the compromise achieved in House Bill 5400 is a necessary step to achieve the goal of ensuring all Michiganders have access to primary and preventive health care, regardless of where you live or which type of insurance you carry.

Research demonstrates Advance Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) play a key role in the health care safety net as they disproportionately practice in underserved areas where our centers are located, and they fulfill a function that is critical in meeting the health care needs of urban and rural populations, especially those in designated Health Professional Shortage Areas.¹ For the past many years, MPCA has supported the effort to establish APRN scope of practice in Michigan, advocating for physician groups to come to a compromise with the nursing community where APRNs can practice to the top of the training and education in accordance with national accreditation standards. We are encouraged that compromise has finally been achieved through House Bill 5400 and offer our strong support of the legislation. Thank you for this opportunity.

¹ National Governors Association (2012). The Role of Nurse Practitioners in Meeting Increased Demand for Primary Care. Retrieved from <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1212NursePractitionersPaper.pdf>.